

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 398

Condemning the construction of a shopping center within the internationally protected zone around the Auschwitz death camp in Poland.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 29, 1996

Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. DEUTSCH, and Mr. McNULTY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Condemning the construction of a shopping center within the internationally protected zone around the Auschwitz death camp in Poland.

Whereas approximately 1,500,000 innocent civilians, primarily Jews, but also including Gypsies, political opponents of Nazism, Poles, homosexuals, and others, were murdered at the Auschwitz death camp during World War II;

Whereas the Auschwitz death camp memorializes the brutality of the Holocaust;

Whereas the Polish Government is a signatory to the 1972 United Nations Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and National Heritage pursuant to which the Auschwitz death camp was designated as an “historical

site and a place of human testimony” and an internationally protected zone was established around the camp;

Whereas the Polish Government has a duty under international law to enforce a 1,600 foot protected zone around the perimeter of the Auschwitz death camp in which commercial development is prohibited;

Whereas authorities in the southern Polish town of Oswiecim have granted a building permit for the construction of a shopping center immediately opposite the gate of the Auschwitz death camp;

Whereas Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski and the coalition government of Prime Minister Wlodziemierz Cimoszewicz have condemned the proposed plan;

Whereas survivors of Auschwitz, Jewish leaders and organizations, and the State of Israel strongly object to this enterprise;

Whereas construction of the shopping center has been suspended by Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski pending the report of a special fact-finding mission;

Whereas pressure from the international community and the Polish Government has persuaded the largest employer in Oswiecim, Krak Chemia SA, to abandon its plans to run the shopping center near the Auschwitz death camp; and

Whereas the service and trade enterprise that developed the plans for the proposed shopping center, the Maja Foundation, has not decided whether it will continue the development of this project: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) condemns in the strongest possible terms
- 3 the construction of the shopping center within the

1 internationally protected zone around the Auschwitz
2 death camp as a violation of international legal con-
3 ventions signed by Poland and as a trivialization and
4 desecration of the site where more than 1,000,000
5 innocent people were murdered;

6 (2) calls upon the Government of Poland to
7 overrule local authorities, comply with its inter-
8 national legal obligations, and permanently halt
9 commercial construction at the Auschwitz death
10 camp;

11 (3) calls upon the Government of Poland to
12 permanently close the grounds within the inter-
13 nationally protected zone around the Auschwitz
14 death camp to any development;

15 (4) recognizes the special nature of the Ausch-
16 witz death camp and the sanctity of the ground
17 upon which it rests; and

18 (5) directs the Clerk of the House of Represent-
19 atives to convey a copy of this resolution to the
20 President of Poland.

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